

HE HAS RISEN

Mark 16:1-20

Key Verse: 16:6

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him."

Chapter 16 is the story about the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this story Mark tells that the women who had followed Jesus before the crucifixion did not run away. They followed Jesus to the end, even beneath the cross. They followed Jesus, but they did not believe the resurrection of Jesus. At the time of Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus' disciples were terrified. Now they were in deep despair and were hungry. The disciples saw the Risen Christ. But they did not believe in his resurrection. Still Jesus did not give up on them. The Risen Christ helped them believe in his resurrection by visiting them first and teaching them the Bible, the same old, old story. The Risen Christ also commanded them to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

I. He has risen (1-14)

First, the women's desire to anoint Jesus' body (1-3). The several women mentioned here are Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. Mary, Jesus' mother, Mary Magdalene, John Mark's mother Mary, Mary the wife of Cleopas; there were many Mary's in the gospels. These women had seen God in Jesus and had begun to serve him and his disciples out of their own expenses. To them, serving Jesus and his disciples was not easy. But they wanted to serve them with full devotion. Unexpectedly, good Jesus died on the cross. Jesus who was so good, was crucified on the cross between two criminals. They could not understand why such a good person as Jesus was crucified so tragically. So they began to weep.

Suppose there is no love in the world, the world would not be beautiful at all; it would only be desolate like the desert surrounding Las Vegas. Everybody knows that a woman's love is a beautiful thing. Jesus died on the cross. But the women who had followed Jesus loved Jesus all the more and longed for him more than before. They said to themselves, weeping, "What can we do for Jesus now?" In the past they treasured some expensive oils and spices. Now they brought them to anoint Jesus' body. In deep sorrow and pain they waited, not sleeping at all, until the Sabbath day passed, until the early dawn of the first day of the week. To them, Friday the thirteenth was too painful and too long. They came to the tomb of Jesus before the sun rose in order to anoint his body. As they walked toward the tomb in the early dawn, they worried about who would roll the stone away from the tomb for them, saying, "The stone is too heavy for us to move." When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away. They were alarmed. Jesus was not waiting for them to anoint his body.

Second, he has risen, he is not here (4-7). What did the women do? Look at verse 5. "As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed." He was an angel of God keeping watch over Jesus. What did the angel say to them? Look at verse 6. The young man said to them, "Don't be alarmed. You are

looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him." The angel's message was the key point of the Bible. It was the key point of Jesus' teaching. The angel's tidings were good news of great joy to all men. But they did not believe that Jesus was risen. So they were sorry. They had seen Jesus' tomb tightly closed up by the stone and the soldiers keeping watch over it (Mt 27:65,66). Now the stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty. Still the women did not know how to stop weeping.

The death of Jesus made the earth shake and the rocks split. The tombs broke open. Speechless nature cried. How much more were the women's hearts broken. But Jesus' death was not an ordinary man's death. His death was the death of the Son of God. He was crucified and killed at the hands of lawless men, but the death of Jesus was not a tragic death. It was to fulfill God's will for world salvation. Jesus died as the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29). Acts 2:23-28 say, "This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him: 'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'"

The angel came and told them the good news. "'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen!'" (6) God did not abandon Jesus who died to obey his will for world salvation. Acts 2:32,33 say, "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear." Through Jesus' resurrection God destroyed the last enemy of mankind, death. In the world, there is no hope because death swallows up whatever man can possess, even his own life. 1 Peter 1:24,25a say, "For, 'All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.'" Again, 1 Peter 1:3 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...." In Jesus we have a living hope. Nothing lasts forever. But through Jesus' death and resurrection God gave us a living hope. Through his resurrection, God's paradise is restored. Those who believe in him will receive eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Jesus reminded them of the promise he made to see them again. Look at verse 7. "But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" This good news of his resurrection was not instant; it had been promised and fulfilled in accordance with Bible prophecies. Especially this promise was given to the disciples right before his arrest. Mark 14:28 says, "But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." This promise has immense background. This promise has two points: Jesus' death on the cross and his glorious resurrection. During his earthly messianic ministry, Jesus made a most strenuous effort to plant in his disciples' hearts his suffering, death and resurrection. The first time

Jesus predicted his death and resurrection was in Mark 8:31. It says, "He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again." He spoke plainly about this. How did his disciples respond? "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him" (8:32). A second time Jesus wanted to plant his death and resurrection in their hearts. So he said in Mark 9:31, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." What was the response of his disciples? "But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it" (9:32). The disciples were idealistic and human glory seeking. So they could not understand what Jesus was talking about-his death on the cross and his glorious resurrection which gives us a living hope in the kingdom of God. Another time, Jesus wanted to plant resurrection faith. Jesus said in Mark 10:33-34, "We are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise." In Mark 14:28 Jesus said to his disciples, "But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." This promise is short, but it is the promise taught and realized when Jesus rose from the dead and went to Galilee ahead of them. This promise is the key point of the Bible. This promise is the only living hope for all mankind. But the disciples did not remember. It was because the promise was too big to believe and they were too fearful to believe in it in their situation.

The women were faithful. But they also did not remember his glorious resurrection promise, because they did not listen to Jesus' words concerning his death and resurrection. They knew how to serve Jesus, but they never knew how to listen to Jesus' teaching.

Third, the Risen Christ visits his disciples (8-14). The women who had heard the angel's message were stunned. So, trembling and bewildered, they went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid (8). The news they had heard from the angel was the good news of great joy. But they did not believe the resurrection of Christ because they did not have one promise of God in their hearts.

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, the power of sin and death was gone. And eternal life in the kingdom of God came upon those who believed in him. But the women did not believe. Still, the Risen Christ did not give up on them. Look at verse 9. "When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons." Mary Magdalene was a totally abandoned person in the society because of her immoral life. She was possessed by seven demons. She was tortured by seven demons day and night, and her life was misery itself. But by believing in Jesus she was cured from demon possession and she became a normal person. Now, this once wretched woman was the first person in history who saw the glorious Risen Christ. What a beautiful story of Jesus' grace and truth. Jesus hoped that she would better understand the spiritual world. She went to the disciples and told them the fact that Jesus was alive. How did the disciples respond? They were weeping and mourning, saying, "O my broken dream, O my marriage problem. My stomach is growling unceasingly." In self-pity, they did not accept the resurrection message.

Afterward, Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. According to Luke 24, apparently these two disciples were the ones who were running for their lives to Emmaus in deep despair after Jesus' crucifixion. The Risen Christ met them and taught them the Bible persistently. In light of Luke, Jesus taught them Genesis to Revelation. After the Bible study, their hearts were moved and their spiritual eyes opened to see the Risen Christ. They were happy. They felt that they could see the kingdom of God. They felt that the world was like the kingdom of God. So they came to the other disciples and told them with great conviction what they had seen and heard—the resurrection of Christ. But the disciples did not believe. These men were the ones whom Jesus had called. When they first received his call, they made great sacrifices to follow Jesus. As they lived with Jesus, they came to love him. They came to realize that he was not an ordinary man. They realized that he was the Son of the living God. Once Peter confessed his faith, "You are the Christ." After this event, Jesus taught them the meaning of his death and resurrection. At every opportunity Jesus planted resurrection faith in them. But when Jesus was crucified, they were paralyzed with fear and could not remember even one word of Jesus.

What did Jesus do with his unbelieving disciples? Look at verse 14. "Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen." The Risen Christ visited his disciples and rebuked them first for their lack of faith. Their unbelief came from their lack of faith. One student wants to finish his college courses and get married. But he does not study. So he cannot graduate. Without graduating, he cannot marry because no one wants to marry a bum. He has a lack of desire. Likewise, the disciples could not believe Jesus' resurrection because they had no faith in Jesus' teachings, especially about the resurrection of Jesus. They did not believe the resurrection of Jesus because their hearts were stubborn. The disciples followed Jesus to learn of him. But they had a fixed idea that Jesus would establish the earthly messianic kingdom, and each of them would be his cabinet members. These days many people think that they can buy happiness with money. One young lady said, "I am not happy with yuppie life. I want to live poorly and purely like Jesus." Her parents, whose idea was fixed that money is God, called deprogrammers to brainwash her. But they failed miserably.

Most importantly, the disciples could not imagine that a dead man would come back to life. With many reasons, the disciples' idea was fixed to the things of the world. They loved Jesus so dearly. But in believing his promise of glorious resurrection they were very slow.

Jesus didn't wait until they finished eating. He rebuked them while they were eating. Jesus' rebuking really worked. Through the Risen Christ's rebuking they could have resurrection faith in God. We must remember that Jesus taught his disciples the meaning of his death and resurrection during his earthly messianic ministry, and during the time after his resurrection before his ascension.

II. The Risen Christ gave them the world mission command (15-20)

First, "Go into all the world..." (15). What did Jesus tell these weak disciples? Look at verse 15. "He said to them, 'Go into all the world

and preach the good news to all creation.'" Jesus gave them the world mission command, in spite of their spiritual condition. He told them, "Go into all the world." And he said, "Preach the good news to all creation." Of course, Jesus knew that they couldn't afford to go to foreign countries as missionaries. But Jesus believed that they would go to the ends of the earth.

Jesus knew that his disciples were weak. But he also believed that God would give them the power of the Holy Spirit. He believed that God would preach the gospel to the whole world. He believed that through these men God would give his gospel to all the people who are suffering under the influence of evil spirits. At that time, the disciples were hiding from the Jewish authorities. They were in a helpless situation. But Jesus gave them the world mission command. Here we learn that Jesus wants us to obey his world mission command absolutely, no matter what the situation is.

Second, the Risen Christ teaches them that the gospel is absolute (16-18). Jesus also believed that the gospel is absolute. Read verse 16. "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Verse 16 contrasts the extremes of salvation and condemnation. Those who believe in Jesus will be saved. Their sins are forgiven. They become heirs of God with Christ. Those who don't believe in Jesus will be condemned. This condemnation is eternal punishment. Some people take the gospel lightly and live to satisfy their own desires and ambitions. They will be condemned to eternal punishment in the lake of fire. The only way to be saved from eternal punishment is to believe in the gospel. Only the gospel is good news of great joy for all men.

Look at verses 17,18. The Risen Christ promised to give power to gospel workers. He gives power to cast out demons. He gives power to speak in tongues. When we really receive the world mission command in our hearts, our language problem disappears. The last part of verse 18 says, "They will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." These words promise healing power to gospel workers. And God promises that he will take care of his servants. Even though they pick up snakes or drink poison, they will not be harmed. This means that God will protect us from all harms when we have absolute faith in Jesus Christ who died and rose again on the third day. But one church elder was a little presumptuous. He was attending a hallelujah church. He did not try to have absolute faith. He wanted to show himself off. He picked up a poisonous snake before his church members. Then the poisonous snake bit him and he was swollen to death. Having absolute faith and experimenting with faith is quite different. So don't pick up snakes without absolute faith. We cannot carry out the world mission command. But the Risen Christ will carry it out through us when we have absolute faith in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Third, after the ascension of the Risen Christ the disciples work (19-20). After Jesus finished speaking to his disciples, he ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. What happened to the disciples when Jesus ascended into heaven? Look at verse 20. "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it." Before the ascension, the disciples did not have faith in the Risen Christ. But

after the ascension of Jesus, the Spirit of Jesus came upon them. Jesus' teaching about his death and resurrection began to work. In the past, they were powerless to do anything. But when they had faith in the resurrection of Christ, they became powerful servants of God and their gospel work was powerfully carried out.

May the Risen Christ rebuke us of our unbelief and plant in our hearts that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only hope for all mankind. May the Risen Christ command us: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."

We have studied Mark's Gospel. Mark 10:45 seems to be the key verse of Mark's Gospel. It says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." The Son of the Most High God did not come to be served, but to serve. We must learn to serve our Lord Jesus Christ who died on the cross and rose again on the third day. These days so many people are irritable and unhappy and complaining unceasingly about nothing. It is because they do not know how to serve others in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. But they want to be served by others. So they become selfish and they are endlessly unhappy living in God's beautiful world. Jesus, even though he is the Son of Almighty God, came to this world to serve all kinds of sinners. Finally, he served mankind through his death as a ransom for many. Thus, he became our King of kings and Lord of lords. Thus, he became one who is worthy of receiving our honor and glory and power and wisdom. Today we studied about the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He served us with his body by being crucified on the cross. But God had mercy on him and raised him on the third day after his death and made him the Risen Christ. Without the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have no hope because we have no destination after death. But through his resurrection we have a living hope in the glorious kingdom of God. We thank our Lord Jesus Christ who gave his life to give us a living hope in the kingdom of God. May God be gracious unto you and help you accept the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ so that the kingdom of God will be yours.